



Knowledge: The Key to Success

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The adage that ignorance is bliss could not be farther from the truth when seriously put into practical application. Throughout the annals of time, what great accomplishments has ignorance made? What great empires and what marvels of science and technology now bear witness to ignorance's strength and power? That's right, none. Nothing of true worth is achieved without wisdom and knowledge.

It was with supreme knowledge that Allah, SWT, laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth. It was with wisdom, knowledge and understanding that Soleiman (AS) ruled the greatest empire the world has ever known. Our own



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Prophet, Mohammad (salla Allah `alihy wassallam) told us that acquiring knowledge was a duty placed on each and every Muslim. [Authenticated by Al-Albani].

«طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم» صححه الألباني

But the knowledge of what and who remains the question.

Many of us have used the above saying of the Prophet (salla Allah `alihy wassallam), to justify dealing in riba (interest), in order to send our sons and daughters to the finest universities to become doctors, lawyers and engineers. We use it to justify sending our children to private schools, because they supposedly have higher academic standing and prestige than Muslim schools. We say we are doing it, because the Prophet (salla Allah `alihy wassallam) said to get knowledge, but is this the knowledge he was speaking about?

It is narrated by Abu Musa that the Prophet (salla Allah `alihy wassallam) said, "The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain-water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain- water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, (making their animals drink from it) and to irrigate the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then the land was of no benefit). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's Religion and gets benefit from the knowledge which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches it to others. The (last example is that of a

person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's Guidance revealed through me (He is like the barren land)." [Bukhari].

«مثل ما بعثني الله به من الهدى والعلم، كمثل الغيث الكثير أصاب أرضاً، فكان منها نقية، قبلت الماء، فأنبتت الكلأ والعشب الكثير، وكانت منها أجادب، أمسكت الماء، فنفع الله بها الناس، فشربوا وسقوا وزرعوا، وأصاب منها طائفة أخرى، إنما هي قيعان لا تمسك ماء ولا تنبت كلأ، فذلك مثل من فقه في دين الله، ونفعه ما بعثني الله به فعلم وعلم، ومثل من لم يرفع بذلك رأساً، ولم يقبل هدي الله الذي أرسلت به» رواه البخاري

Through the above narration, the Prophet (salla Allah `alihy wassallam) is telling us of the superiority of religious knowledge. This is the knowledge that we should give priority to. All other knowledge will not be of benefit if we do not have this one. First and foremost; comes the knowledge of Allah; Knowing His names and His attributes, Knowing what is expected of us in regard to our servitude to Him, and what mutual rights exist between us.

Secondly, we should strive to know Allah's Book, the Qur'an. We should learn to read it in Arabic, if we don't already know how to do so. We should also be trying to memorize as much of it as possible, and stressing the importance of both of these things to our children. Reading the Qur'an should be something commonplace in every Muslim home, and is an activity that the whole family can, and should participate in.

Thirdly, we should know about the Prophet Muhammad, sallallaahu alayhe wa sallam, and his companions. It's by reading their stories that we learn of their bravery, love for the Deen and their complete devotion to Allah. It's by knowing them that we grow to love them, and through loving them, we strive to become

more and more like them. This is especially true, when most children nowadays want to be like Mike (Michael Jordan) or Janet Jackson or some other celebrity. They want to emulate these people, because they know so much about them. It then becomes increasingly important for us Muslims to introduce our children to our heroes. Who were braver in battle than Umar and Hamza; who was more wise and gentle than Abu Bakr (RAA); and which women were more graceful and honorable than the wives of the Prophet were?

Yes, in these times of increasing technology and information superhighways, it is important to obtain secular knowledge. Also, as a nation, we do need doctors, lawyers and engineers. But we need people who are knowledgeable of their religion first and foremost. What good will it do us to have a nation of professional people who do not know how to make the salah, or to calculate the zakah, or how to perform Hajj?

Ignorance is not bliss. Through it runs the deviant courses of innovation, shirk, disunity and hatred. Knowledge is the key to our success. It gives us the power to govern ourselves, our households, and ultimately our communities. A nation, which forgets why it was founded, who it serves, and what its responsibilities are, by embracing ignorance, is a nation destined to fail.

By Sumayyah bint Joan

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